Teacher guide: arguments and fair replies

Classroom copy · 1 October 2026

Teacher guide · Grade 6 ELA

Use this pack after teaching Distinguish Claims, Reasons, and Relevant Evidence and Respond to a Counterargument. Review a short student response, choose practice for the skill that needs attention, and use a new situation for a follow-up check.

Prepare and administer

Read all keys and the exposure map. Select one full student file. Reserve teacher answers, recheck and transfer. Learners use only its supplied cases, not outside research or invented supporting facts. Ask about prior access; keep local records without names or other identifiable data. No response upload is requested.

Give neutral read-aloud, enlarged text, extra time, typing, dictation or oral explanation as appropriate. Keep statement labels and wording intact. Do not add an interpretation or response suggestion during a check. If reasoning help is given, note it and interpret as supported practice.

First teaching as needed

Use Distinguish Claims, Reasons, and Relevant Evidence for role/relevance instruction and Respond to a Counterargument for fair representation and responses. Their exposed texts are teaching materials. New check/recheck/transfer cases here are distinct from those introductory lesson passages.

Interpret cautiously

Read the full explanation, not just labels. Ask neutral clarification such as “Which part of the supplied text do you mean?” when wording or access is uncertain. Do not infer stance, effort, diagnosis or mastery. If the independent condition failed, fix access or exposure conditions before using another new task.

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What to look for: Claims, reasons, and relevant evidence

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Use the four criteria below to interpret claims, reasons and evidence. Record each separately as demonstrated, partial, not yet evident, or unable to interpret, with the actual words and conditions. These descriptive decisions are local teaching notes, not validated score thresholds.

Criterion 1 — Identifies the claim and reason by their function in the argument. A statement may fill a different role in another argument; judge its stated role here.

Criterion 2 — Distinguishes specific evidence from a reason or unrelated detail. Accept clear descriptions without requiring one exact label phrase.

Criterion 3 — Explains whether evidence supports the reason and how the reason supports the claim. Relevant evidence may have limits; do not treat limited scope alone as irrelevance.

Criterion 4 — Bases classification on argumentative function and relevance, not agreement with the position. Do not score whether learners support or oppose the claim.

Apply them to these tasks

criterion 1: look for correct claim and reason functions, with clear paraphrases accepted. criterion 2: distinguish specific relevant support from the explanation and unrelated detail. criterion 3: require the evidence-to-reason and reason-to-claim links; note scope/limits in the explanation. criterion 4: look for classification based on function even when the learner questions or disagrees with the proposal.

A swapped reason/evidence label with a good explanation may show a vocabulary confusion; record both instead of treating the whole response as failure. Limited invented counts can be relevant without proving a universal effect. A same-topic fact is unrelated when no reasoning link is supplied. Do not require criticism of every possible limitation.

What to look for: Fair replies to a counterargument

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Use the four criteria below to interpret a fair reply. Apply them to the speaker and situation in the selected task.

Criterion 1 — Represents a relevant main concern and the stated alternative accurately and fairly, without exaggerating the view or assigning an unstated motive. For the independent response, one accurately stated main concern plus the speaker’s stated alternative is sufficient for 2 points. Do not lower that score solely because other concerns are omitted. Apply the learner rubric’s 0–2 descriptors; varied wording is acceptable.

Criterion 2 — Explains why the selected concern matters and clearly connects the response to that concern. Use the learner rubric: award 2 when both the importance explanation and response link are clear, 1 when only one is clear, and 0 when neither is clear. A reasoned agreement or qualification is scored by those same two elements.

Criterion 3 — Gives a connected reason, practical change, agreement, or qualification and names a relevant remaining limit. Do not require a trial or a particular conclusion. The response and limit should connect to concerns in the scenario.

Criterion 4 — Communicates reasoning clearly enough to evaluate fairly, regardless of the learner’s position. Do not score whether the learner supports or opposes the proposal, or require a particular personal conclusion.

Apply the 0–2 descriptors per criterion, without summing them or setting a mastery threshold: criterion 1 2 = one accurate main concern plus stated alternative; 1 = concern with omitted/partly misstated alternative or partial concern misstatement; 0 = no relevant concern or substantial distortion. Other concerns may be omitted for 2.

criterion 2 2 = concern importance and explicit response link; 1 = just one clear; 0 = neither clear. criterion 3 2 = related response plus relevant remaining limit; 1 = one only; 0 = neither. criterion 4 2 = easy-to-follow reasoning; 1 = main idea partly clear; 0 = not yet clear. Record access uncertainty separately. Supporting the alternative, original option or a qualified mix can receive the same decisions.

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Choose focused practice

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Observed response under stated conditions	Supplied task and teaching move	What to examine next
Roles and links emerging; reply fairly names concern/alternative	Continue: puzzle chain, gallery reply and needed-information question	Whether both links and a concern-linked limit become explicit
Reason confused with evidence; same-topic detail treated as support; speaker's view exaggerated	Clarify: compare A/D and C in puzzle argument; repair the supplied unfair gallery paraphrase	Whether explanation distinguishes jobs and repairs the actual representation
Unable to establish roles or a connected reply despite neutral access clarification	Reteach: separate folder-tab/poem models; chunk puzzle roles and four-part gallery reply	Which reasoning can be completed with named support before fresh recheck
Core reasoning clear and learner ready for different demand	Extend: reclassify meeting fact in a new argument; write two defensible gallery replies	Contextual role change, distinct connected plans and honest remaining limits

These are examples for teacher choice, not automatic assignments. Choose different routes for the two targets if needed: use that route's two role pages or two reply pages and record the split using the exact print map. Do not send everyone through every route. All routes share an intentionally exposed practice pair; repetition is not independent evidence.

After the route

Discuss the practice response using its answer guidance. After more practice, offer the follow-up situations if students have not seen them. Later, use the final pair after another learning opportunity. Compare each kind of reasoning across responses. If a skill still needs work, return to its practice task or introductory lesson.

Which tasks to save for later

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Selection	Cases	Use/exposure
Introductory lessons: argument roles and fair replies	Original introductory lesson passages	First teaching; already exposed passages stay practice
Initial Check	Tool labels; project recordings	Reserve until initial post-teaching check
All four routes	Puzzle-bag cards; gallery questions	These practice choices use the same situations
Reteach only	Folder tabs; poem sharing	Separate completed teaching miniatures
Follow-up Check	Sewing-kit checklists; rehearsal questions	Reserve from check feedback and route teaching
Later Practice	Archive index; exhibit explanations	Reserve until later application

Keys and examples discuss new situations and belong only to teachers. Do not distribute this guide, the ZIP, or another student selection containing a new pair of situations before use. Direct public files can have been accessed; ask and record rather than assume secrecy. If a pair was shared, shown or discussed, it is exposed even when the learner did not complete it.

If you are unsure what students have seen or what help they received, note that before interpreting the response. Choose another suitable story they have not seen when one is available. Keep the shared practice situations for teaching and discussion.

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Printing and recording responses

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PDF file	All pages	Roles task	Counterargument task
Initial Check	1–4	1–2	3–4
Continue Practice	1–4	1–2	3–4
Clarify the Reasoning	1–4	1–2	3–4
Model and Practice	1–5	model 1; task 2–3	model 1; task 4–5
Extend the Reasoning	1–6	1–2 plus extension 5	3–4 plus extension 6
Follow-up Check	1–4	1–2	3–4
Later Practice	1–4	1–2	3–4
Start Here	1–2	teacher orientation	no student task
Teacher Guide	1–21	keys and guidance	teacher-only

Find answer guidance under the title of the selected task. The opening pages explain preparation, criteria, practice choices and printing. Classroom-use terms appear at the end.

Whole selected files are the default. For a split route, print the complete target pages listed, including its source and continuation. Reteach requires miniature page 1 for either target. Extend requires the relevant extension page. Provide extra labeled paper, typing or recorded dictation if the response room is insufficient. DOCX has explicit authored page breaks; application pagination may vary.

Non-identifying local record

Use a private work label. Record the date, task title, whether students had seen the story, response method, help given and the student’s actual explanation. Note the four argument-role criteria separately from the four fair-reply criteria. Record uncertainties, the practice you choose and the next task. Keep these notes in your school’s usual private storage; no student upload is needed.

Example of a fictional decision: a response calls the puzzle meeting count evidence merely because it mentions the club. Choose clarify for Criterion 2/criterion 3 and compare A/D/C; this says what needs discussion in this response, not what the learner always knows.

Check: arguments and fair replies: role key

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Initial check · Argument roles

Tool labels

A. In an invented one-afternoon session, 11 of 14 club members returned a paper punch to its assigned tray after reading a tool-name label. B. The craft club should label its tool trays with tool names. C. The club’s noticeboard lists four upcoming craft meetings. D. Tool-name labels can help members find the assigned place when returning tools.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason D; relevant evidence A; unrelated detail C. The 11 of 14 return count is specific support for members using a label to find an assigned return place; that explanation gives a reason for labeling trays. The meeting count does not support tool return. One invented afternoon with 14 members does not establish lasting effects, results for everyone or improved learning.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

Classify by the stated job, not order. Accept another precise limit tied to the supplied evidence. Keep this case for a later independent attempt.

Check: arguments and fair replies: fair-reply key

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Initial check · Fair reply

Project recordings

In an invented class, Jo proposes that each project group record a two-minute explanation so absent classmates can hear its main choices. Ren says: “Some members do not want their voices recorded, and making a recording takes editing time. A short written explanation of the group’s choices would be another option.” No recordings or written explanations have yet been made.

One fully reasoned answer

Ren is concerned that members may not want their voices recorded and suggests a short written explanation. That matters because sharing a project should not require a member to record their voice. I would use the written explanation so everyone can contribute without voice recording. This still takes preparation and may not give absent classmates the sound or emphasis of a spoken explanation.

Acceptable alternatives

Alternatively, a recording could use only willing speakers, with others contributing text, while keeping a written version. This connects to voice choice but still needs editing and does not ensure every absent classmate can use it. A reply favoring recording must address the selected concern; simply saying recordings are better is insufficient. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Evaluate fair representation, concern importance plus explicit reply link, related response plus remaining limit, and clarity separately. Do not require a trial, preferred option or all concerns.

Continue: connect and consolidate: role key

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Continue practice · Argument roles

Puzzle-bag cards

A. A contents card can help borrowers notice a missing piece before they leave the puzzle area. B. The puzzle club should attach contents cards to its puzzle bags. C. The puzzle club has three puzzle meetings planned for next month. D. In an invented bag check, 8 of 10 borrowers used a contents card to notice a piece was missing before leaving.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason A; relevant evidence D; unrelated detail C. The 8 of 10 count supports noticing a missing piece using the card, which is the reason for attaching cards. Planned meeting count shares the club topic but does not support piece checking. The invented check concerns ten borrowers; it does not show whether pieces were later found or that every borrower will notice omissions.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

Needed-information example: ask whether borrowers who notice a missing piece can locate or report it before checkout; an answer would help decide whether the card needs a reporting instruction. This is not an asserted result.

Continue: connect and consolidate: fair-reply key

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Continue practice · Fair reply

Gallery questions

In an invented class gallery, Dev proposes that visitors post questions on a large sheet beside each project so groups can respond later. Inez says: “A sheet could fill before quieter visitors add a question, and groups may not have time to answer every question. Each visitor could hand in one small question card instead.” No response time or number of visitors is supplied.

One fully reasoned answer

Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors add a question and suggests one small card per visitor. This matters because a visitor should have a place to ask even if others write first. I favor the cards because each visitor can contribute one question without waiting for space on the sheet. Groups will still need time to read and answer the cards, and one card limits how many questions a visitor can ask.

Acceptable alternatives

A learner may favor the sheets with a separate reserved area or a card option for visitors, while recognizing that reserved space can still fill and answers need time. For answer-time concern, one card per visitor limits submissions but does not prove groups can answer them all; grouping similar questions is a proposed change, not a guaranteed result. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Needed-information example: ask how many questions groups could respond to with the time actually available. That could inform limiting, grouping or scheduling replies; do not supply an invented result.

Clarify: distinguish and repair: role key

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Clarify the reasoning · Argument roles

Puzzle-bag cards

A. A contents card can help borrowers notice a missing piece before they leave the puzzle area. B. The puzzle club should attach contents cards to its puzzle bags. C. The puzzle club has three puzzle meetings planned for next month. D. In an invented bag check, 8 of 10 borrowers used a contents card to notice a piece was missing before leaving.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason A; relevant evidence D; unrelated detail C. The 8 of 10 count supports noticing a missing piece using the card, which is the reason for attaching cards. Planned meeting count shares the club topic but does not support piece checking. The invented check concerns ten borrowers; it does not show whether pieces were later found or that every borrower will notice omissions.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

A explains the possible benefit; D offers a specific invented result. C names the same club but says nothing about noticing pieces. Accept another wording that states those functional distinctions.

Clarify: distinguish and repair: fair-reply key

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Clarify the reasoning · Fair reply

Gallery questions

In an invented class gallery, Dev proposes that visitors post questions on a large sheet beside each project so groups can respond later. Inez says: “A sheet could fill before quieter visitors add a question, and groups may not have time to answer every question. Each visitor could hand in one small question card instead.” No response time or number of visitors is supplied.

One fully reasoned answer

Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors add a question and suggests one small card per visitor. This matters because a visitor should have a place to ask even if others write first. I favor the cards because each visitor can contribute one question without waiting for space on the sheet. Groups will still need time to read and answer the cards, and one card limits how many questions a visitor can ask.

Acceptable alternatives

A learner may favor the sheets with a separate reserved area or a card option for visitors, while recognizing that reserved space can still fill and answers need time. For answer-time concern, one card per visitor limits submissions but does not prove groups can answer them all; grouping similar questions is a proposed change, not a guaranteed result. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

The unfair paraphrase wrongly turns Inez’s concerns about space and response time into a desire to stop all questions, and omits the one-card-per-visitor alternative. Repair: Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors contribute and suggests a small card for each visitor. One accurate main concern plus that alternative is enough; the learner need not repeat all concerns.

Reteach: model, chunk and explain: role key

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Model and practice · Argument roles

Puzzle-bag cards

A. A contents card can help borrowers notice a missing piece before they leave the puzzle area. B. The puzzle club should attach contents cards to its puzzle bags. C. The puzzle club has three puzzle meetings planned for next month. D. In an invented bag check, 8 of 10 borrowers used a contents card to notice a piece was missing before leaving.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason A; relevant evidence D; unrelated detail C. The 8 of 10 count supports noticing a missing piece using the card, which is the reason for attaching cards. Planned meeting count shares the club topic but does not support piece checking. The invented check concerns ten borrowers; it does not show whether pieces were later found or that every borrower will notice omissions.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

Prompt one job at a time without labeling the puzzle answer. Fade the prompts only as appropriate and record them. Completed miniature key: A claim, B reason, C relevant evidence, D unrelated; finding the folder is the reason, 4/5 is the specific support, and Tuesday has no stated link. A five-person check does not establish lasting or universal effects.

Reteach: model, chunk and explain: fair-reply key

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Model and practice · Fair reply

Gallery questions

In an invented class gallery, Dev proposes that visitors post questions on a large sheet beside each project so groups can respond later. Inez says: “A sheet could fill before quieter visitors add a question, and groups may not have time to answer every question. Each visitor could hand in one small question card instead.” No response time or number of visitors is supplied.

One fully reasoned answer

Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors add a question and suggests one small card per visitor. This matters because a visitor should have a place to ask even if others write first. I favor the cards because each visitor can contribute one question without waiting for space on the sheet. Groups will still need time to read and answer the cards, and one card limits how many questions a visitor can ask.

Acceptable alternatives

A learner may favor the sheets with a separate reserved area or a card option for visitors, while recognizing that reserved space can still fill and answers need time. For answer-time concern, one card per visitor limits submissions but does not prove groups can answer them all; grouping similar questions is a proposed change, not a guaranteed result. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Completed poem model accurately states that some writers may not want to read aloud and identifies a voluntary silent poem table. The reply explains participation choice, connects silent sharing to it, and notes preparation/no spoken performance. Another full reply can keep voluntary readings plus a table, noting space and preparation. Chunk the gallery reply, record prompts, then use a new situation for fresh evidence.

Extend: change context and compare responses: role key

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Extend the reasoning · Argument roles

Puzzle-bag cards

A. A contents card can help borrowers notice a missing piece before they leave the puzzle area. B. The puzzle club should attach contents cards to its puzzle bags. C. The puzzle club has three puzzle meetings planned for next month. D. In an invented bag check, 8 of 10 borrowers used a contents card to notice a piece was missing before leaving.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason A; relevant evidence D; unrelated detail C. The 8 of 10 count supports noticing a missing piece using the card, which is the reason for attaching cards. Planned meeting count shares the club topic but does not support piece checking. The invented check concerns ten borrowers; it does not show whether pieces were later found or that every borrower will notice omissions.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

In the calendar argument, the meeting statement is specific relevant evidence for giving members a calendar of planned dates. In the original it is unrelated to noticing pieces. It supports calendar usefulness but does not prove attendance or all members’ preferences. An added question might ask whether borrowers can read or use the contents card; answers would inform format, not prove every bag is complete.

Extend: change context and compare responses: fair-reply key

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Extend the reasoning · Fair reply

Gallery questions

In an invented class gallery, Dev proposes that visitors post questions on a large sheet beside each project so groups can respond later. Inez says: “A sheet could fill before quieter visitors add a question, and groups may not have time to answer every question. Each visitor could hand in one small question card instead.” No response time or number of visitors is supplied.

One fully reasoned answer

Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors add a question and suggests one small card per visitor. This matters because a visitor should have a place to ask even if others write first. I favor the cards because each visitor can contribute one question without waiting for space on the sheet. Groups will still need time to read and answer the cards, and one card limits how many questions a visitor can ask.

Acceptable alternatives

A learner may favor the sheets with a separate reserved area or a card option for visitors, while recognizing that reserved space can still fill and answers need time. For answer-time concern, one card per visitor limits submissions but does not prove groups can answer them all; grouping similar questions is a proposed change, not a guaranteed result. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Second full reply example: Inez worries that a sheet may fill before quieter visitors contribute and suggests one card per visitor. Having a place for each voice matters. I would keep the sheet but also offer cards whenever space fills, so a visitor still has a way to submit a question. Groups still may lack time to answer every submission. To compare with cards alone, ask about available sheet space, visitor numbers and response time; none is supplied. Distinct replies need connected reasoning, not opposite conclusions alone.

Fresh recheck: new arguments and replies: role key

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Follow-up check · Argument roles

Sewing-kit checklists

A. The costume club’s storage cupboard has a blue door. B. In an invented kit return, 9 of 12 members who used a printed checklist noticed an unreturned item before putting the kit away. C. A checklist can help members notice missing items at return time. D. The costume club should include printed checklists with its sewing kits.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim D; reason C; relevant evidence B; unrelated detail A. The 9 of 12 count supports noticing an unreturned item while using a checklist; that gives a reason for including checklists. Cupboard color has no stated link. The invented return does not establish all members’ behavior, lasting results or that every item was eventually returned.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

Classify by the stated job, not order. Accept another precise limit tied to the supplied evidence. Keep this case for a later independent attempt.

Fresh recheck: new arguments and replies: fair-reply key

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Follow-up check · Fair reply

Rehearsal questions

In an invented drama group, Ali proposes a question circle after each rehearsal so members can discuss confusing scenes. Noor says: “People who need to leave promptly could miss the discussion, and some members do not want to ask a question aloud. A question envelope collected before rehearsal ends would be another option.” The group has not tried either approach; no answer schedule is given.

One fully reasoned answer

Noor worries that people leaving promptly could miss discussion and suggests an envelope collected before rehearsal ends. This matters because leaving on time should not prevent someone from contributing a question. I support the envelope because members can submit a question before they leave. A person still needs to read and answer it, and a written question does not give the immediate conversation a circle might provide.

Acceptable alternatives

A shorter circle held before rehearsal ends plus an envelope option can address departures and speaking choice. It may reduce rehearsal time and still needs an answer plan. Agreement with the circle, envelope or a qualified mix can meet all four criteria. Do not invent evidence that one approach has worked. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Evaluate fair representation, concern importance plus explicit reply link, related response plus remaining limit, and clarity separately. Do not require a trial, preferred option or all concerns.

Later transfer: archive and exhibition: role key

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Later practice · Argument roles

Archive index

A. A room-name index can help visitors locate recordings about a room without listening to every recording. B. The invented community archive should add a room-name index to its audio tour. C. The archive offers audio recordings in two languages. D. In an invented test with 16 visitors, 12 used a room-name index to select the recording about a room they wanted.

Complete key and reasoning

Claim B; reason A; relevant evidence D; unrelated detail C. The 12 of 16 selections are specific support for locating a wanted room recording using an index, which gives a reason for adding it. Two languages might matter to another argument, but has no stated link to locating a recording by room here. The invented test does not establish comprehension, universal preference or every visitor’s access.

Accept accurate role descriptions, concise or oral explanations, and another scenario-supported limit. Do not require these exact phrases. Evaluate the statement’s function here, not its truth or the learner’s position.

Route-specific support / alternatives

Classify by the stated job, not order. Accept another precise limit tied to the supplied evidence. Keep this case for a later independent attempt.

Later transfer: archive and exhibition: fair-reply key

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Later practice · Fair reply

Exhibit explanations

In an invented community exhibition, Tess proposes live explanations at each object station so visitors can ask questions. Omi says: “Visitors arriving between explanations may miss them, and a live explanation may be hard to hear in a busy room. Printed explanation cards at the objects could be another option.” No visitor survey, schedule or hearing test is supplied.

One fully reasoned answer

Omi is concerned that visitors arriving between live explanations could miss them and suggests printed cards. That matters because arrival time should not determine whether a visitor gets an explanation. I support cards available at each object so a visitor can read at their own time. They still need to be readable and do not let a visitor ask a follow-up question as a live explanation could.

Acceptable alternatives

Live explanations could be retained at stated times with cards available between them; this directly addresses arrival gaps but still needs staff and may not solve hearing difficulty. If selecting hearing difficulty, cards offer a text option but readability and access remain limits. No supplied evidence establishes which method works best. One accurately stated main concern plus the stated alternative is enough for full representation; other concerns may be omitted.

Route-specific steps

Evaluate fair representation, concern importance plus explicit reply link, related response plus remaining limit, and clarity separately. Do not require a trial, preferred option or all concerns.

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